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Allston-Brighton

Neighborhood Profile

1988



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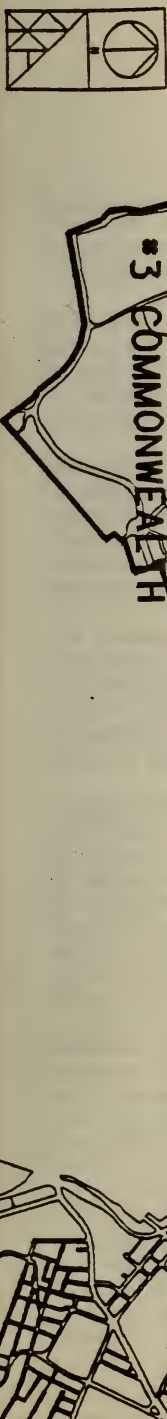
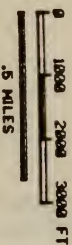
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PLANNING DISTRICT #8 ALLSTON/BRIGHTON AND NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICAL AREAS



NEWTON

CHARLES RIVER

#3 COMMONWEALTH

#2 BRIGHTON

BROOKLINE

W. BRACON ST

W. ALLSTON

CAMBRIDGE ST

W. HARVARD ST

BRIGHTON AV

ALLSTON-BRIGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Introductory Overview

From 1635 to World War II, Allston-Brighton developed from an agricultural community into large stockyards serving the region, and later diversified industrially. Containing 4.5 square miles, Allston-Brighton is Boston's largest, most populous neighborhood.

After World War II, two major changes affected Allston-Brighton: the Massachusetts Turnpike divided Allston-Brighton even more than the previous railyards, cutting through existing neighborhoods and shopping areas, and the growth of local universities brought in a flood of students. High concentrations of elderly, college students and working class families now combine to present a wide range of lifestyles.

The area's population in 1980 was 65,264 or 11.6% of the City of Boston's total population. Large groups of Irish, Italian, Greek and Jewish populations have been joined by Chinese, Blacks, and Hispanics in the district's residential areas. Allston-Brighton today is one of the City's best integrated and most diverse neighborhoods. However, half its households contain single residents, and another quarter are composed of unrelated individuals.

The predominant housing type is a wood frame, single family unit, but 1 to 6 family structures, rowhouses, garden apartments, and medium rise apartments all are present in substantial numbers, many of which have recently been converted into condominiums. There is also much assisted housing and several dominant public housing developments, including Faneuil and Commonwealth/Fidells Way, which have been the focus of modernization efforts.

I. Neighborhood History

Settlement began in 1635 when the area was opened to land grant settlers. A pattern of sparsely settled agricultural land prevailed until the filling of Back Bay and Kenmore Square in the late 1800's, by which time the Brighton stockyards had become the foremost cattle market in the region. At that time, the extension of street car lines encouraged high quality residential development in Brighton, much of which still remains today.

In Allston and the northern and eastern sections of Brighton, the proximity to the Charles River and to the Boston and Albany Railroad encouraged the construction of stockyards, slaughterhouses, and meatpacking operations. As the nation expanded westward and refrigerated railroad cars were introduced, the Brighton stockyards declined in importance, and were replaced by other industrial plants, commercial warehouses, and even houses. Since settlement was unplanned, housing, commercial and industrial uses were intermingled, causing a confusing and blighted environment that still exists in some sections today.

After World War II, the construction of the Mass. Turnpike extension isolated Allston even more from Brighton than the railroad tracks due to the greater width of its right-of-way, the noise and air pollution, and because it severed pedestrian links. Meanwhile, the proximity to expanding universities on all sides resulted in a considerable influx of students, younger families and new workers into the district, which spurred much conversion of housing into providing more, smaller units and condominiums.

Table Ia. Allston-Brighton Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980

	1950 -----	1960 -----	1970 -----	1980 -----
Population	67,102 (8.4)	64,207 (9.2)	63,657 (9.9)	65,264 (11.6)
Housing units	21,314 (9.6)	23,452 (9.8)	25,324 (10.9)	29,548 (12.2)
Persons/unit	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.2

Note: figures in brackets are percent of Boston total.

See section at end of profile describing sources, as well as the methodology.

Source: a)

II. Demographics

By 1985, Allston-Brighton had become an area of young adults, with one of the lowest median age levels among Boston's neighborhoods. Over two-thirds of its population was between the ages of 15 and 34 in 1985. Although the 5,500 group quarters population, one-twelfth of this large district, was mostly students, the majority of the neighborhood's young adults were beyond school age and were working. Over two-thirds of the households were also non-family, living either as singles or as roommates.

Characteristic of Boston's young adults, high educational attainment and occupational skills prevailed, along with high mobility. Allston-Brighton joined Fenway-Kenmore as one of Boston's fastest growing neighborhoods from 1980 to 1985.

Table IIa. Population, 1985*

	Total -----	Population in group quarters -----	Household population -----	Persons per household -----
Allston-Brighton	68,413	7,079	61,334	2.1
City of Boston	601,095	49,595	551,500	2.4

* Note difference between total population and household population.

Most of the following tables refer to household population as explained in the end notes for source b).

Table IIb. Age Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	Median age -----	0-14 -----	15-24 -----	25-34 -----	35-54 -----	55+ -----
Allston-Brighton	25.9 yrs	6	39	30	11	14
City of Boston	28.8 yrs	17	23	22	20	18

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

The neighborhood had the largest concentration of Chinese outside of Chinatown. Except for the Chinese, there were relatively few other minorities.

Table IIc. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	White, not - Hispanic	Black	Hispanic*	Asian	Other races
Allston-Brighton	81	2	4	12	1
City of Boston	62	25	7	5	1

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

* Hispanic includes self-designated Hispanics plus those who speak Spanish in the home or were born in a Spanish-speaking country

Source: b)

Allston-Brighton had very few single parent households. Also, there were considerably fewer traditional families than average because over three-fourths of its households were composed of unrelated individuals. In fact, 49 percent of the total were single person households in 1985.

Table IIId. Household Composition, 1985
(in percent)

	Traditional families and couples	Single parent households	Single person household	Household of unrelated individuals
Allston-Brighton	23	1	49	27
City of Boston	36	16	34	14

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

III. Income and Poverty

Allston-Brighton's household income was a little higher than the city average because of above-average family income, although many unrelated individuals had below-average income.

Table IIIa. Median Household Income and Portion in Poverty in 1979 and 1984

	Median household income		Percent in poverty			
	1979	1984	1979 all persons	1984 all persons	1984 all families	1984 unrelated persons
Allston-Brighton	\$12,301	\$22,400	22	17	8	22
City of Boston	12,530	19,250	20	21	22	17

Source: b)

IV. Mobility and Migration

Allston-Brighton had decidedly fewer residents born in Boston; instead, it had a larger proportion from other parts of the U.S. and Canada. Even though one-fifth of the households have been at their home in Allston-Brighton over 16 years, the rest of its population was particularly mobile. Over half had been in their dwelling less than two years.

Table IVa. Place of Birth of 1985 Residents
(in percent)

	Massachusetts	Other U.S. and Canada	Europe	Elsewhere
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Allston-Brighton	41	37	7	15
City of Boston	55	25	5	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Table IVb. Years in Dwelling Unit of 1985 Residents
(in percent)

	<2	2-5	6-10	11-15	16+
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Allston-Brighton	53	21	4	2	21
City of Boston	28	27	16	10	19

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

V. Employment

Labor force participation in Allston-Brighton was high and many were employed in service occupations. A variety of workplaces in Allston/Brighton support 29,500 jobs. A sizeable manufacturing base and health and hospital services account for over 4,000 jobs each. The area also specializes in business services and retail trade, including eating and drinking establishments.

Table Va. Labor Force Status, Spring 1985
(in percent)

	Participation rate (Persons aged 16 yrs +)	Unemployment rate
	-----	-----
Allston-Brighton	68	3
City of Boston	66	6

Source: b)

Table Vb. Industry of Resident Workers, 1985
(in percent)

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.*	Services	Gov't	Other
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Allston-Brighton	11	15	8	48	3	16
City of Boston	14	16	8	36	11	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

* F.I.R.E. is an abbreviation for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

Source: b)

Table Vc. Employment Within Neighborhood, 1983

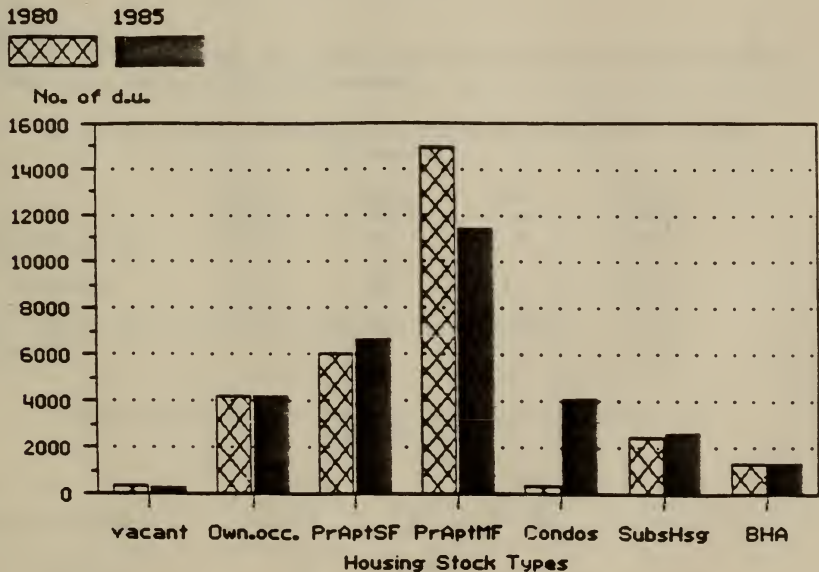
	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.	Services	Gov't	Other
Allston-Brighton	4,100	7,200	800	10,100	3,200	4,100
City of Boston	48,900	81,000	78,800	171,000	91,500	58,100

Source: c)

VI. Housing

Allston-Brighton was second only to the Central district in net additions to its housing stock from 1980 to 1985. Allston-Brighton is currently still a neighborhood of renters: three of every four households rent their units. However, condominium conversions was already at a fever pitch in 1985. In early 1985, Allston-Brighton had 4,127 condominiums; by the end of 1986, it had 5,757, in effect doubling the 1980 rate of resident ownership.

The stock of condominiums in the neighborhood in 1985 was second only to Back Bay-Beacon Hill. By then, 17 percent of Allston-Brighton's housing units were condominiums, which was comparable to Fenway-Kenmore, but still much less than the Back Bay-Beacon Hill and Central neighborhoods. Property values and rents in Allston-Brighton are the highest of any planning district not contiguous to the Downtown.

Table VIa. Housing Stock Composition by Structure Types, 1980 and 1985
(in dwelling units)

Source: c)

=====										
:ALLSTON/BRIGHTON: Private Housing and Condos :Assisted Housing:										
:Stock type:	:1-4 vacant	:Dwn.occ.	:PrAptSF	:PrAptMF	:CondoSF	:CondoMF	:SubsHsg	:BHA	:Total	:
:1-4(SF)/5+(MF)	:1-4(SF)	:1-4(SF)	:1-4(SF)	:5+(MF)	:1-4(SF)	:5+(MF)	:Mixed	:5+(MF)	:Mixed	:
=====										
:1980	: 3%	375	4,145	6,019	14,916	0	366	2,442	1,277	29,540
:% of pl.dist.	:	1	14	20	50	0	1	8	4	100
=====										
:1985	: 2%	236	4,214	6,583	11,351	18	4,109	2,646	1,277	30,434
:% of pl.dist.	:	1	14	22	37	0	14	9	4	100
=====										
:change '80-'85	:	(139)	69	564	(3,565)	18	3,743	204	0	894
:% chg from '80	:	(37)	2	9	(24)	inf	1,023	8	0	3
=====										

Source: c)

Table VIb. 1-3 Family Property Values and Median Gross Rents, 1980 and 1985

	1-3 family property values		Median monthly gross rents	
	1979	1985	1980	1985
Allston-Brighton	\$55,000	\$180,000	\$291	\$530
City of Boston	32,000	115,000	254	400

Source: b)

VII. Transportation

In terms of mode of transportation to work and car ownership, Allston-Brighton practices were fairly close to the city average.

Table VIIa. Means of Household Transportation to Work, 1985
(in percent)

	Vehicle	MBTA	Walk	Other
Allston-Brighton	52	36	9	3
City of Boston	50	33	15	3

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Table VIIb. Number of Vehicles Owned per Household, 1985
(in percent)

	None	1	2	3 or more
Allston-Brighton	34	47	10	9
City of Boston	39	42	14	5

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

VII. Summary of Recent and Imminent Development

The Allston-Brighton planning district will experience an investment of \$440 M over the 1975 to 1989 period, according to source e). This investment will be primarily in the educational sector with \$205.5 M or 47 percent of all development in Allston-Brighton and 60 percent of all educational investment in Boston. Half of this money was invested by Harvard in 1977 to produce 1.3 million square feet at the Business School, Boston University has invested \$65.3 M, which is 32 percent of all educational expenditures in Allston-Brighton, and Boston College has expended \$38 M on their facilities which is another 18 percent.

The second greatest area of investment in Allston-Brighton is residential development which accounts for 31 percent of all development over the 1975 to 1989 period. This residential investment will total \$135 M and will have produced 2,575 dwelling units (DU). It includes 1,409 DU of new construction (55%), 536 DU of adaptive reuse construction (21%), and 630 DU of renovations (24%). These units are being built and renovated as 167 condos units (6.5%), 1247 rental units (48%), 163 single family units (6.5%), 617 B.H.A. units (24%), and 381 unclassified units (15%). The rental market is very strong in Allston-Brighton because of the large student population.

The medical institutions have also invested in Allston-Brighton with \$34 M or about 8 percent of all development activity. Saint Elizabeth's Hospital is responsible for \$33 M as a result of their four phase investment spanning the years 1983 to 1986. A medical office building is also being developed in Allston-Brighton for \$1 M, which will be three stories tall when completed in 1987.

The Boston hotel industry is also expanding in Allston-Brighton with the 310 room Embassy Suites Hotel. This facility was completed in 1985 at a cost of \$20.5 M, making the hotel industry 5 percent of all development.

The office industry is also producing 230,000 SF of office space in Allston-Brighton. The banner year for office production in Allston-Brighton was 1986 when 182,000 SF came on line, but overall, the office sector contributed only 4 percent to Allston-Brighton development between 1975 and 1989. In a recent period between 1983 and 1989 it has grown to 7 percent of all development. Therefore, if this trend continues, the office sector may continue to play a greater role in the Allston-Brighton economy.

Sources and Methodology

a) - *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980*

b) - *B.R.A. and P.F.D. Household Survey, 1985*, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, U. Mass. at Boston. A sample of over 2,000 households, carefully drawn to reflect Boston's household population, was questioned in the spring of 1980, to parallel the 1980 U.S. Census. In 1985, exactly five years later, the same methodology was employed again to obtain an update and to identify neighborhood shifts. This survey did not include the group quarters population

To learn more about changes in these planning districts by 1985, the several thousand observations available from the 1985 BRA/PFD Household Survey were differentiated to the limit. Knowing such changes as the shift in number of persons by race/ethnicity and age group in each district is valuable for planning. However, this divides the available data into so many cells that it limits reliability tests. The inferences should therefore be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

c) - *Boston's Changing Housing Patterns, 1970 to 1985*, Rolf Goetze, consultant to the B.R.A., November 1986. The 1980 U.S. Census does not specifically identify assisted dwelling units or the structure types within which they occur. It also does not indicate the type of stock in which condominiums are located, or when rental dwellings are in resident-owned structures. Therefore, available city data were carefully analyzed to obtain an overview and identify current housing patterns, as described in this source paper.

To aid in tracing the 1980 to 1985 changes in Table VIa, the housing stock was divided into units located in 1-4 unit structures, and those in 5 or more multi-unit structures. The 1-4s, dubbed 1-4(SF) for single family, are largely singles, duplexes and triple-deckers, and tend to have a high rate of owner occupancy. **PrAptSF** designates the private apartments rented in this stock. In 1984, significant condominium conversion of triple-deckers commenced in some districts, shown as **CondoSF**.

Multifamily is designated as 5+(MF), and includes private rentals in this stock, **PrAptMF**, and condominiums, **CondoMF**, as well as public housing owned and managed by the Boston Housing Authority, **BHA**. Subsidized housing, **SubsHsg**, refers to the privately-owned developments assisted under such federal programs as Section 221(d)(3), Section 236, and Section 8, as well as state assistance programs under EOCD and MHFA. The newly built assisted housing tends to be in multifamily structures, whereas the rehabilitated stock is more likely to be in 1-4 unit stock.

Table VIa also shows how the total stock in each time period is distributed, as well as the absolute and percent change.

d) - *U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1983*

e) - *A Summary and Survey of Development in Boston, 1975 - 1989*, John Avault and Mark Johnson, April 1987, based on compilations maintained on "ULTRALIST" by the BRA Research Department



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